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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Putin makes landmark visit to Turkey - Sabah
Putin, Ankara to discuss terror, Straits issue - Hurriyet
12/5

Bush-style protection for Putin - Milliyet
FM Gul: Turkey ready for December 17 summit, EU is not -
Milliyet
Erdogan says Ankara will not yield to EU pressure on Cyprus
- Milliyet 12/5
Greek Cypriot lawmaker admits atrocities against Turks in
1964-65 - Aksam
US loses its allure; foreign students flee country -
Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Ankara at work with its 'new partner' Russia - Radikal
Putin seems determined to improve ties with Turkey - Zaman
Ankara urges Putin to press for united Cyprus - Yeni Safak
Russia offers nuclear cooperation in talks with Turkey -
Zaman
Edelman may become Rice's 'best man' - Radikal
Papadopoulos pushes Turkey on recognition of Nicosia -
Cumhuriyet
Turkmen targeted again in US operation in Tal Afar -
Cumhuriyet
New torture photos in Iraq put US in difficult position -
Zaman 12/5
Resistance shifts to north of Iraq - Yeni Safak
'Hawkish' Rumsfeld keeps post - Zaman 12/5
Egypt, Israel swap prisoners - Cumhuriyet
Iran criticizes Europe over human rights violations - Yeni
Safak

BRIEFING

Putin in Turkey: Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Turkey Sunday for a landmark visit, during which the two sides will look at ways to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to boost trade. Putin attended a dinner given by President Sezer later Sunday in advance of official talks on Monday, during which the two sides will sign six agreements and a joint declaration on deepening multilateral cooperation. The joint declaration will also include a call for a greater UN role in international disputes, a development characterized by "Cumhuriyet" as a 'significant message' to the Bush Administration. Bilateral trade between the two countries is expected to rise to \$10 billion by the end of 2004, and could reach to as much as \$25 billion in a few years' time, Turkish officials say. On Sunday, Putin said he hopes to see a 'united Cyprus,' and Turkey expects him to take an active role in resolving the 30-year-old problem. Ankara is expected to seek Russian backing for new oil pipelines to ease heavy tanker congestion in the Bosphorus. The Russians complain that Turkey is deliberately restricting tanker traffic through the Bosphorus at a time when a US-backed pipeline to carry Azeri oil via Turkey is nearing completion. Moscow has long accused Ankara of turning a blind eye to the activities of Chechen separatists, who enjoy popular support in Turkey. Russia has repeatedly asked Turkey to prevent Turkish citizens from joining Chechen rebel groups and to block efforts by non-governmental organizations to send financial aid to the rebels. More than 3,000 policemen have been mobilized to ensure Putin's safety during his stay. Police in Istanbul detained 12 suspects -- nine Chechens and three Turkish nationals of Chechen descent -- with alleged ties to 'religious terrorist organizations' in advance of the Putin visit. Several CDs and video cassettes seized along with

the suspects contained images of Osama bin Laden and attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda militants. On Saturday, some number of Chechen groups in Turkey protested against the visit because of Moscow's policies in Chechnya. The Chechens urged the Turkish government to help end the occupation in Chechnya and disarm the region.

AKP letters to US cause strain: AK Party lawmaker Cemal Yilmaz Demir sent a letter to President Bush on November 25 in an individual act of protest condemning the US military operation against Fallujah, Monday's "Sabah" reports. Another AKP lawmaker, Atilla Basoglu, collected about 140 signatures in parliament for a letter denouncing the US Ambassador to Ankara for using the title 'Ecumenical' for Archbishop Bartholomew I. According to "Sabah," MFA bureaucrats were involved in drafting the letter on the Patriarchate issue and helped to soften some of its wording.

US increases pressure for reopening of Halki Seminary: In a meeting with deputy PM Mehmet Ali Sahin in Washington last week, State Department U/S Marc Grossman said that the reopening of Halki Seminary would facilitate EU entry talks for Turkey. Sahin confirmed that Washington had urged Ankara to accept a number of requests put forth by the Patriarchate in Istanbul. Sahin also said he had expressed his displeasure with the fact that the Halki Seminary issue was being linked to Turkey's EU accession process.

US operation in TalAfar: 200 Turkmen have been detained by US and Iraqi forces in a new US military action in Tal Afar, "Cumhuriyet" and "Yeni Safak" report. The articles claim that 130 of the detained Turkmen were subsequently released. "Cumhuriyet" cited international wire services for its report that Turkmen buildings, including offices of the Turkmen Front, were raided during the operation.

Erdogan opens 'Armenian Friendship Museum': On Sunday, PM Erdogan applauded Turkish Armenians for their contribution to the nation at the opening ceremony of the 'Armenian Friendship Museum' in Istanbul. Erdogan warned the EU against submitting minority demands to Turkey just before the EU summit later this month.

Turkey to launch discussions on presidential system: The government will take up the debate about the introduction of a presidential-type system in Turkey following the EU summit on December 17, Monday's "Sabah" reports. Justice Minister Cemil Cicek said that a presidential system would ensure political stability as Turkey makes the reforms that will be necessary to join the European bloc.

European Parliament Speaker in Diyarbakir: Visiting European parliament Speaker Josep Borrell called on the governor and mayor of Diyarbakir on Sunday, and met with a number of local NGOs. Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir said that '20 million Kurds' will also join the EU when Turkey is admitted into the European bloc. On Saturday, former DEP lawmaker Leyla Zana hosted a luncheon in honor of Borrell in Istanbul. Weekend papers report that Borrell pressed the Turkish government to recognize Cyprus before the EU summit in December. Sunday's "Sabah" speculates that if given a date for accession talks at the EU summit, Ankara would sign an additional protocol to its Customs Union (CU) agreement with EU. Such an action would effectively recognize the Greek Cypriot administration.

EDITORIAL OPINION

"Putin's Visit": Rahim Er wrote in the conservative-mass appeal "Turkiye" (12/6): "The President of the Russian Federation is in Ankara today. He came to Turkey at the invitation of President Sezer. That means he will be hosted in Turkey at the highest level. Putin's Foreign, Defense, and Energy Ministers, as well as the autonomous Presidents from Tatarstan and Ingushetia, are accompanying him. Turkey has a 500-year history with Russia. Our relations have always been very dramatic. Turkey and Russia have frequently fought with each other. Our first friendly relations began during Turkey's War of Independence. We used Russia against the occupying West. After that, however, the policies of Stalin caused a complete break in relations. In order to defend against communism, Turkey established its alliance with the west. But now, conditions are completely different. There are thousands of Turkish businessmen in Russia and vice versa. There is an increase in exports to Russia. Economics ties have deepened. The bilateral meetings today will focus on energy, alternative routes for oil tankers, terrorism, and many other issues. Relations between the two countries have never been this close, sincere, and based on mutual benefit. It should be remembered that the Russian Federation also has a very large Muslim population. Russia is a 'B plan' for Turkey. As the EU continues to hesitate in giving Turkey a date for accession talks and the US treats Ankara lightly, Turkey is pushing ahead with its 'B plan.' This proves once again

that in foreign policy, there are no eternal hostilities, and no everlasting friendships."

"Tyrants, Imperialists and Others"

Asli Aydintasbas commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (12/6): "The Islamist Saadet Party has recently stepped up its protests against the United States. The AKP is following these protests closely. The reason is not that AKP fears losing votes to Saadet, but rather because these demonstrations reflect the AKP's basic reflex as well. The feelings expressed in these demonstrations are no different from what is expressed in AKP circles. Islamists are interpreting the Fallujah and Patriarch issues as cruel acts carried out by Christians against Muslims. Many members of the government share this belief. A source close to PM Erdogan said that `if we (the AKP government) had not criticized the US on Fallujah and about the Patriarch issue, the reaction in the street would be much more serious -- hundreds of thousands would have protested against the US.' Other than the Saadet Party protests, public protests in Turkey have been limited. It is true that protests in Turkey against the US have been more extreme than those seen in Arab countries. The reason is that none of the Arab countries have a free press. The paradox in Turkey is that as democratization becomes more settled, relations with the US weaken. If we look at the full picture, the AK party, just like during the March 1 process, is in a very sensitive and delicate situation. Despite everything, so far the AK party has managed to keep a balance in its policies toward Europe and the US. Let's see what will happen now."

EDELMAN